

CIACO NID 81 [REDACTED]

March 25, 1981

POLAND: Pivotal Meeting Today

Neither the regime nor Solidarity has shown any sign it intends to give in during the very difficult and perhaps pivotal meeting today. [REDACTED]

Party leader Kania yesterday said Solidarity's call for strikes created the "danger of self-destruction" and turned a local incident into an issue that "threatens national catastrophe." [REDACTED]

Deputy Premier Rakowski, who will meet with union leader Walesa today, warned that Solidarity's leaders are attempting to become the "new owners" of Poland. He also said "stubborn demands" will not break socialist power in the country but might lead it into a "fratricidal conflict." [REDACTED]

A reliable report suggests the regime--at least during today's meeting--will continue to stand by its story that the incident last week in Bydgoszcz was caused by Solidarity and that the police did not harm the three Solidarity functionaries who were injured. A government investigating commission is still studying the matter. [REDACTED]

Solidarity, after a long and stormy meeting Monday night, yesterday issued a call for a warning strike on Friday and a general strike next Tuesday unless the government meets its demands. The union also has formed a 10-member strike committee headed by Walesa that will operate out of Gdansk. Union leaders from the Warsaw area have moved into the large Ursus factory to conduct their business. [REDACTED]

The union is waging an extensive and apparently effective propaganda campaign about the incident in Bydgoszcz. Posters and leaflets providing Solidarity's version of events have appeared in a number of cities, and the populace apparently believes the union's story. Students in Krakow have declared a strike alert in support of Solidarity. [REDACTED]

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Economic Problems

The political tension has aggravated the food shortage. Radio Warsaw last night reported that long lines of people were waiting to buy food in three cities along the Baltic coast and that an "acute" food shortage exists. The governor of Gdansk has ordered all food rationed. Even before the latest political crisis, a Politburo member suggested that food riots could occur in Poland if supplies do not improve. In addition, a Polish economist recommended immediate introduction of bread rationing. [REDACTED]

Moscow has signaled approval for a hard line toward Solidarity by carrying in TASS the statement made by the Polish Politburo on Sunday essentially word for word. TASS, significantly, quoted from the original Warsaw Radio version of the statement and ignored changes in a subsequent Polish version that appeared to leave open the door for some compromise by the regime. [REDACTED]

Moscow Radio commentator Yuri Shagylin yesterday echoed this tough stance and called Solidarity's plans for protest strikes "political" in nature. In a broadcast on Sunday, he had charged Solidarity's leadership with attempting to establish "dual power" in Poland. [REDACTED]

We have no indications the Soviets have begun additional preparations to ready their forces for intervention as a result of the heightened tensions. [REDACTED]

The Warsaw Pact exercise Soyuz-81 is probably entering its final phases. [REDACTED]